 **Emily Dickinson** (1830 - 1886)

***"If I read a book [and] it makes my whole body so cold no fire can ever warm me I know that is poetry. If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry. These are the only way [sic] I know it. Is there any other way."*** *Emily Dickinson*

Emily Elizabeth Dickinson was born on December 10, 1830 in the quiet community of Amherst, Massachusetts, the second daughter of Edward and Emily Norcross Dickinson. Emily, Austin (her older brother) and her younger sister Lavinia grew up in a quiet, reserved family headed by their authoritative father Edward. Throughout Emily’s life, her mother was not "emotionally accessible," which might have caused some of Emily’s eccentricity. Rooted in the puritanical Massachusetts of the 1800’s, the Dickinson children were raised in the Christian tradition, and they were expected to take up their father’s religious beliefs and values without argument. Later in life, Emily would come to challenge the conventional viewpoints of her father and the church.

Although Emily never married, she had several significant relationships. In the period after her return from school Emily began to dress all in white and choose the few who would be her own private society. Refusing to see almost everyone that came to visit, Emily seldom left her father’s house. During this time, in her early twenties, Emily began to write poetry seriously In Emily’s lifetime,

The Reverend Charles Wadsworth, age 41, had a powerful effect on Emily’s life and her poetry. Emily met Wadsworth on her trip to Philadelphia. He became her "dearest earthly friend". Wadsworth, like Dickinson, was a solitary, romantic person in whom Emily could confide when writing her poetry. It is widely believed that Emily had a great love for Wadsworth even though he was married. Many of Dickinson’s critics believe that Wadsworth was the focal point of Emily’s love poems.

When Emily had written a number of poems, she sought advice about anonymous publication, and in 1862 she found Thomas Wentworth Higginson, an eminent literary man. She wrote a letter to Higginson and enclosed four poems. Although Higginson advised Dickinson against publishing her poetry, he did see the creative originality in her poetry, and he remained Emily’s mentor for the remainder of her life. Emily decided against publishing her poems, and only seven of her poems were published in her lifetime.

**I have no life but this**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| I HAVE no life but this, |  |
| To lead it here; |  |
| Nor any death, but lest |  |
| Dispelled from there; |  |
|  |  |
| Nor tie to earths to come, | *5* |
| Nor action new, |  |
| Except through this extent, |  |
| The realm of you. |  |
|  |  |

[](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a1/Walt_Whitman_edit_2.jpg) Walt Whitman

***“Behold I do not give lectures or a little charity, When I give I give myself.”***

(May 31, 1819 – March 26, 1892) was an [American](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) [poet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poetry_of_the_United_States), [essayist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essay), [journalist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Journalism), and [humanist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Humanism). He was a part **of the transition between** [**Transcendentalism**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transcendentalism) **and** [**realism**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Literary_realism)**, incorporating both views in his works. Whitman is among the most influential poets in the American canon, often called the father of** [**free verse**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_verse)**.**[**[1]**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walt_Whitman#cite_note-Reynolds314-0) **His work was very controversial in its time, particularly his poetry collection** [***Leaves of Grass***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leaves_of_Grass)**, which was described as obscene for its overt sexuality.**

**Born on** [**Long Island**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Long_Island)**, Whitman worked as a journalist, a teacher, a government clerk, and a volunteer nurse during the** [**American Civil War**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Civil_War) **in addition to publishing his poetry. Early in his career, he also produced a temperance novel, *Franklin Evans* (1842). Whitman's major work, *Leaves of Grass*, was first published in 1855 with his own money. The work was an attempt at reaching out to the common person with an American** [**epic**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epic_poetry)**. He continued expanding and revising it until his death in 1892. After a stroke towards the end of his life, he moved to** [**Camden, New Jersey**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camden,_New_Jersey) **where his health further declined. He died at age 72 and his funeral became a public spectacle.**[**[2]**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walt_Whitman#cite_note-Loving480-1)[**[3]**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walt_Whitman#cite_note-Reynolds589-2)

**Whitman's sexuality is often discussed alongside his poetry. Though biographers continue to debate his sexuality, he is usually labeled as either** [**homosexual**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homosexuality) **or** [**bisexual**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bisexuality)**.**[**[4]**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walt_Whitman#cite_note-Buckham-3) **It is not clear if Whitman had sexual relationships with men.**[**[5]**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walt_Whitman#cite_note-Loving19-4) **Whitman was concerned with politics throughout his life. He supported the** [**Wilmot Proviso**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilmot_Proviso) **and opposed the extension of slavery generally, but did not believe in the abolitionist movement.**

**O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!**

***by: Walt Whitman (1819-1892)***

http://www.poetry-archive.com/o_pic.gifCaptain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,

The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won,

The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,

While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;

But O heart! heart! heart!

O the bleeding drops of red,

Where on the deck my Captain lies,

Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;

Rise up -- for you the flag is flung -- for you the bugle trills,

For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths -- for you the shores a-crowding,

For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;

Here Captain! dear father!

This arm beneath your head!

It is some dream that on the deck,

You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,  
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,

The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,

From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;

Exult O shores, and ring O bells!

But I with mournful tread,

Walk the deck my Captain lies,

Fallen cold and dead.



**Thomas Stearns Eliot**,

***“***[***Whatever you think, be sure it is what you think; whatever you want, be sure that is what you want; whatever you feel, be sure that is what you feel.***](http://www.quotationspage.com/quote/38971.html)***”***

(26 September 1888–4 January 1965), was a [poet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poet), [playwright](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Playwright) and [literary critic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Literary_critic). He received the [Nobel Prize in Literature](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nobel_Prize_in_Literature) in 1948. Among his most famous writings are the poems [*The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Love_Song_of_J._Alfred_Prufrock), [*The Waste Land*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Waste_Land), [*The Hollow Men*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Hollow_Men), [*Ash Wednesday*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ash_Wednesday_(poem)) and [*Four Quartets*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Four_Quartets); the plays [*Murder in the Cathedral*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murder_in_the_Cathedral) and [*The Cocktail Party*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Cocktail_Party); and the essay "[Tradition and the Individual Talent](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tradition_and_the_Individual_Talent)".

Eliot was born in the United States, moved to the United Kingdom in 1914 (at age 25), and became a [British subject](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_subject) in 1927 at the age of 39. Of his nationality and its role in his work, Eliot said: "[My poetry] wouldn't be what it is if I'd been born in England, and it wouldn't be what it is if I'd stayed in America. It's a combination of things. But in its sources, in its emotional springs, it comes from America."

**The Waste Land (extract)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| APRIL is the cruellest month, breeding |  |
| Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing |  |
| Memory and desire, stirring |  |
| Dull roots with spring rain. |  |
| Winter kept us warm, covering | *5* |
| Earth in forgetful snow, feeding |  |
| A little life with dried tubers. |  |
| Summer surprised us, coming over the Starnbergersee |  |
| With a shower of rain; we stopped in the colonnade, |  |
| And went on in sunlight, into the Hofgarten, | *10* |
| And drank coffee, and talked for an hour. |  |
| Bin gar keine Russin, stamm' aus Litauen, echt deutsch. |  |
| And when we were children, staying at the archduke's, |  |
| My cousin's, he took me out on a sled, |  |
| And I was frightened. He said, Marie, | *15* |
| Marie, hold on tight. And down we went. |  |
| In the mountains, there you feel free. |  |
| I read, much of the night, and go south in the winter. |  |

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Carl_Sandburg_NYWTS.jpg) Carl Sandburg

*“*[*I see America, not in the setting sun of a black night of despair ahead of us, I see America in the crimson light of a rising sun fresh from the burning, creative hand of God. I see great days ahead, great days possible to men and women of will and vision.*](http://www.quotationspage.com/quote/32161.html) *“*

http://www.quotationspage.com/icon_blank.gif

**Carl Sandburg**

Sandburg was born in [Galesburg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galesburg,_Illinois), [Illinois](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Illinois) to [Swedish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sweden) ancestry. At the age of thirteen he left school and began driving a milk wagon. He subsequently became a bricklayer and a farm laborer on the wheat plains of [Kansas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kansas). After an interval spent at [Lombard College](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lombard_College) in Galesburg, he became a hotel servant in [Denver](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Denver), then a coal-heaver in Omaha. He began his writing career as a [journalist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Journalist) for the [*Chicago Daily News*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chicago_Daily_News). Later he wrote poetry, [history](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History), [biographies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biographies), [novels](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Novel), [children's literature](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Children%27s_literature), and [film](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Film) [reviews](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Review). Sandburg also collected and edited books of [ballads](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ballad) and [folklore](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Folklore). He spent most of his life in the [Midwest](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Midwest) before moving to [North Carolina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Carolina).

Sandburg fought in the [Spanish-American War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish-American_War) with the 6th Illinois Infantry, and participated in the invasion of [Guánica](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gu%C3%A1nica,_Puerto_Rico), [Puerto Rico](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puerto_Rico) on [July 25](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/July_25), [1898](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1898). He attended [West Point](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Military_Academy) for just two weeks, for failing mathematics and a grammar exam. Sandburg returned to Galesburg and entered [Lombard College](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lombard_College), but left without a degree in 1903.

Sandburg earned one [Pulitzer Prize](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pulitzer_Prize) for his collection *The Complete Poems of Carl Sandburg*, and another for his biography of [Abraham Lincoln](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham_Lincoln) (*Abraham Lincoln: The War Ye.*

**THE SHOVEL MAN**

ON the street  
Slung on his shoulder is a handle half way across,  
Tied in a big knot on the scoop of cast iron  
Are the overalls faded from sun and rain in the ditches;  
Spatter of dry clay sticking yellow on his left sleeve  
          And a flimsy shirt open at the throat,  
          I know him for a shovel man,  
          A dago working for a dollar six bits a day  
And a dark-eyed woman in the old country dreams of  
     him for one of the world's ready men with a pair  
     of fresh lips and a kiss better than all the wild  
     grapes that ever grew in Tuscany.

 Ezra Poun

***“If a man isn't willing to take some risk for his opinions, either his opinions are no good or he's no good”***

**Ezra Weston Loomis Pound** (October 30, 1885 – November 1, 1972) was an [American](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) [expatriate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expatriate) [poet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poetry), [critic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Critic) and [intellectual](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intellectual) who was a major figure of the [Modernist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modernist_poetry) movement in the first half of the 20th century. He is generally considered the poet most responsible for defining and promoting a modernist aesthetic in poetry.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ezra_Pound#cite_note-0) In the early teens of the twentieth century, he opened a seminal exchange of work and ideas between British and American writers, and was famous for the generosity with which he advanced the work of such major contemporaries as [Robert Frost](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Frost), [William Carlos Williams](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Carlos_Williams), [Marianne Moore](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marianne_Moore), [H. D.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H._D.), [Ernest Hemingway](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernest_Hemingway), and especially [T. S. Eliot](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/T._S._Eliot). Pound also had a profound influence on Irish writers [W. B. Yeats](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Butler_Yeats) and [James Joyce](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Joyce).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | Ancient Music |  | |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | Winter is icummen in,  Lhude sing Goddamm.  Raineth drop and staineth slop,  And how the wind doth ramm!  Sing: Goddamm.   Skiddeth bus and sloppeth us,  An ague hath my ham.  Freezeth river, turneth liver,  Damn you, sing: Goddamm.   Goddamm, Goddamm, 'tis why I am, Goddamm,  So 'gainst the winter's balm.   Sing goddamm, damm, sing Goddamm.  Sing goddamm, sing goddamm, DAMM.   Ezra Pound | |

 Robert Frost

four-time Pulitzer Prize winning American poet, teacher and lecturer wrote many popular and oft-quoted poems including “After Apple-Picking”, “The Road Not Taken”, “Home Burial” and “Mending Wall”;

Robert Lee Frost (named after Southern General Robert E. Lee) was born on 26 March 1874 in San Francisco, California to Isabelle Moodie (1844-1900) teacher, and William Prescott Frost Jr. (1850-1885), teacher and journalist. San Francisco was a lively city full of citizens of Pioneering spirit, including Will who had ventured there from New Hampshire to seek his fortune as a journalist. He also started gambling and drinking, habits which left his family in dire financial straits when he died in 1885 after contracting tuberculosis. Honouring his last wishes to be buried in Lawrence, Massachusetts where he was born, Isabelle, Robert and his sister Jeanie Florence (1876-1929) made the long train journey across the country to the New England town. Isabelle took up teaching again to support her children.

Just nine months after Frost’s death, Kennedy gave a speech at Amherst College, singing Frosts’ praises and speaking on the importance of the Arts in America. Later he said;

“The death of Robert Frost leaves a vacancy in the American spirit....His death impoverishes us all; but he has bequeathed his Nation a body of imperishable verse from which Americans will forever gain joy and understanding.”

|  |
| --- |
| **Reluctance** by: Robert Frost |
| Out through the fields and the woods  And over the walls I have wended;  I have climbed the hills of view  And looked at the world, and descended;  I have come by the highway home,  And lo, it is ended.   The leaves are all dead on the ground,  Save those that the oak is keeping  To ravel them one by one  And let them go scraping and creeping  Out over the crusted snow,  When others are sleeping.   And the dead leaves lie huddled and still,  No longer blown hither and thither;  The last lone aster is gone;  The flowers of the witch-hazel wither;  The heart is still aching to seek,  But the feet question 'Whither?'   Ah, when to the heart of man  Was it ever less than a treason  To go with the drift of things,  To yield with a grace to reason,  And bow and accept the end  Of a love or a season? |